

# Mollycoddle Salesmen! Pussyfoot Advertisers!

*Today is none too soon for both to return to hard training*

BY CHARLES W. HOYT

One night in February, 1918, a score of sales managers, members of the famous New York Sales Managers' Club, met to discuss a curious and unusual subject. As printed in their program, it read something about adjusting sales departments to a wartime basis. What they really talked about was "How Shall We Keep Our Salesmen Busy?" Ordinarily the answer would be "Put Them To Work, Selling Goods."

These sales managers had a lot of good salesmen on their hands, for whom they did not have any real, honest-to-goodness selling. One man said that he had called in all of his men and put them to work in the shipping room. Another said he had invited his men to don overalls and take a job in the factory. Still another reported that he had made good use of his salesmen in tracing lost freight, missing cars and negotiating with the railroads for assistance. All of this was fine, but none of it developed a man's marketing instinct very much.

At previous meetings of the New York Sales Managers' Club such topics had been discussed as: "Intensive Cultivation of a Territory vs. Hitting the High Spots," "Holding Salesmen's Conventions" and "The Use of a Standard Sales Manual." That was in the days "before the war," when sales managers and salesmen had to use the sales sides of their brains.

## Sales Engineering—a Joke!

Two years before the war my book, "SCIENTIFIC SALES MANAGEMENT," was published. We were in a period of over-production, when about everybody needed help in sales work. Many people, for the first time, realized the value of sales, directed and planned from the home office, so the book proved to be most acceptable, over twelve thousand copies being sold, mostly to sales managers and other executives.

And then we landed, without much warning, right in the midst of the greatest Sellers' Market in the world's history. In such a situation, any such practices as Sales Engineering, Intensive Selling or Scientific Sales Management were a joke. BUT ARE THEY TO BE DISREGARDED NOW?

## Are They Like Jeffries?

About four years ago, those who are supposed to do the selling and advertising of our goods BROKE TRAINING. Ever since they have been inactive, market-wise,—they have become flabby, soft. They no longer possess the "come-back" of the old days. They accept turn-downs mildly. They can't stand punishment. Are they like Jeffries?—or can they come back? Now is none too soon to start training.

For the past four years the job of the average sales manager has been to advise customers what proportion of their orders would be filled and to apologize for the delay in shipping the balance. I recently interviewed fifty retail customers of one of our clients. What they told me about the shipments of our customer could be expressed in two words, which this newspaper would not print.

The direction of salesmen has consisted in telling salesmen what not to sell—in telling them to get a new order and at the same time to apologize for not shipping the last order.

For the past four years retail clerks, in waiting on customers, have become accustomed to telling what they were out of, and have acquired an indifferent attitude toward the customer's wants. It is not so very long ago that if you went into a store and asked for something unusual, such as woolen socks, linen underwear or English cretonnes, you were shown a nondescript assortment and informed "these are all we have." But today the goods are here on sale, but the salesmen are missing.

## Strange Sealed Orders

Four years ago advertising agents and managers began to receive strange, unusual orders from the manufacturer. At first they didn't like the orders. Lately, I am inclined to believe, many of them are thriving on this sort of pre-digested diet. "Be careful! Watch your step!" said the bosses. "Don't mention any specific product in our advertisements, because if you do our dealers, whose orders are already long delayed, will protest." Advertising men accordingly (and quite correctly for such times) wrote advertising to build up "prestige"—"favorable acquaintanceship"—"national consciousness"—and similar things for which names were invented. Said those who planned: "We must talk about how long we have been in the business—how well we treat our help—how carefully we build our product."

As a result of eating this pre-digested food, those who did the building and the planning have become somewhat spineless. Isn't it time, before it is too late, that the advertising men go into training and try to prepare the sort of advertising that the times demand?

## What's Wrong with Us?

In a statement prepared for the December, 1920, issue of the Guaranty Trust Company's publication, THE GUARANTY NEWS, Mr. Sabin, President of that Company, says:

"There is so much in the present situation to inspire confidence and hope for the future that it is little short of criminal for any one to paint the picture so blackly, through either ignorance or intent, that these vital facts are obscured. To cite a few pertinent facts: This country will harvest this year one of the largest crops in its history; its transportation congestion has been relieved and its railroad system is for the first time in a decade on a sound financial and operating basis; we have passed through a national election and assured four years of sane administration of public affairs; our banking system has withstood the greatest credit strain in its history and is on a sound and workable basis; the accumulated surplus of five years of splendid prosperity is stored in many ways for our continued use; the markets of the world demand our products and a great mercantile marine is prepared to transport them; this country has not been overbuilt or overextended in any of its underlying activities, and faces no program of readjustment along these lines such as usually precipitates panic conditions. We are in a sounder financial, industrial and political condition than any important nation in the world."

## Another Alibi

Six months ago a Connecticut manufacturer laughed at me for suggesting an aggressive going after business. Said he: "What's the use? I can sell the goods easily enough, but I can't ship them. About every other day some new embargo goes into effect. I believe it would be a mistake for me to spend a lot of money on salesmen, only to discover, about next December, that the railroads cannot or will not deliver them."

It is now December, but they are not talking that way along the line of that railroad today. But they are producing another alibi, namely, that "conditions" aren't right.

The fundamental conditions are right; but there are some other things which need to be set right. There are forty-nine States in the United States: forty-eight regular States and one irregular State, namely, the "State of Mind." The state of mind of those who market must be set going along the proper channels; including manufacturers' or jobbers' executives, sales managers, salesmen, advertising men, retail merchants and retail sales clerks.

Inactivity—a receipt of results without an adequate amount of work—has made mollycoddles of the sales force. Soft-pedaling, on advertising specific products, and the writing of "Up-Stage" copy has made pussyfooters of the advertisers.

Much talk has lately been addressed to the workers, telling them that they must go to work. This talk has been addressed to the wage-earner—to the factory-hand. Equally well should it now be addressed to all those who market; otherwise there will be little need for many factories to make the product.

## Hoyt's Service, Inc., Believes

The time for action has arrived. We welcome the return of the necessity of advertising to sell merchandise. We have helped many firms lay strong foundations through institutional, prestige-building, consumer-acquaintance-forming advertising. Now we welcome the necessity, or rather the opportunity, of drawing dividends, or "Cashing In" on this work.

We welcome the opportunity to "merchandise the advertising," which means, to make the advertising secure orders before it appears in the papers, by first selling it to the salesmen, the jobber and the retailer. We welcome the instructions of our customers who, until recently, have been months behind on deliveries, that we are to advertise specific products. We shall welcome instructions to put prices in their advertisements.

We are ready to participate in salesmen's conventions run in the old time way, with the addition of the new spirit gained by our war experiences. We are glad that we shall no longer listen, at such conventions, to the explanations of the management to the salesmen, as to why their last year's sales were not shipped, and to hazy promises for next year. We hope to listen to the sales manager as he tells the men what he wants, what he expects, and what they can expect if they fail to deliver. From now on, in sales and advertising: "Let's be done with Mollycoddling. Let's put a stop to Pussyfooting."

Hoyt's Service, Inc., is in a position to handle, expeditiously, the building of advertising plans for 1921, of about six additional firms. We would welcome an opportunity to explain our methods.

## To Presidents and General Managers:

A study of the conditions ruling—a look at the outlook rather than at today's situation—should convince you that we are facing prosperous times. "The turn will come," say many authorities, "before 1921 is very old." If you believe this, now is none too soon to bring your forces up into line. Everybody connected with your sales and advertising should be called in and properly instructed. The proper message should go forth from you to your salesmen, and from them to the retailer. Both should be shown the sales possibilities that exist in the products which you make. As for your advertising, demand that it be so built and placed that it, also, carries the real, definite sales message into the field which, in your judgment, the situation demands.

## To Sales Managers:

You should immediately satisfy yourselves that the fundamental conditions which underlie the possibilities for business in your products for 1921 are right. You should convince yourselves that you are not obliged to "mark time" and accept ordinary results from your men. Then you should call your men in and give them your message. Remember the old conditions when you used to teach salesmen how to sell your product? Remember the days when intensive selling was your forte? Remember the meetings when discussions were held as to how to sell the retailer? The time has arrived to return to those early methods and to go after business aggressively.

## To the Salesmen of America:

During the past four years your chief occupation has been to "Take Orders." From now on your job should be to "Sell Goods." For a long while you have been inactive. You are like a colt that is confined in a box-stall. Your powers, physical and mental, have withered through lack of action. A few setbacks set you to puffing. You lack your old time stamina. You must get back into shape. You must no longer mildly accept the stories which your retailers give you about lack of business. You must be ready to show that it is in their power to secure business for your products, if they only will.

## To Advertising Managers and Agents:

You have been writing advertising of the prestige-building sort long enough. Your powers as salesmen, through the use of massed salesmanship or printers' ink, have diminished. Your sales ability has suffered, just as a man's arm confined in a sling suffers after a few months' inactivity. You need to go back into training. From now on you should write and place advertising which creates desire. You should make those who read your advertisements dissatisfied until they have followed your suggestions. You should write and place advertising which will bring orders into the retailers' stores or into the offices or into the factories which you represent. The time to start doing this is now and not six months hence.

## To Retail Merchants:

You have been skimming the cream off the top of the milk long enough. It's time to deserve the business you secure. Be a real merchant, with a firm belief in the good old adage, "Quick Sales and Small Profits." Buy your goods well, merchandise them well, and turn your capital over many times per year. If you don't do it, somebody else will, and people will say of you: "That fellow doesn't know that the war is over. He's a 'has-been.'"

During the past four years it has been easy to sell and advertise goods. In many instances neither advertising nor selling was necessary; but now both are necessary, and needed in Big Quantities. It took very little to start and keep up the sales in the past. From now on big horsepower must be put behind the sales and the advertising to secure the same results. This is a big country, with the wants of a great many people to be supplied. The people have waited during the past few months for liquidation. Nobody has bought anything which they did not need, preferring to await lower prices. But there are many wants unfilled, there are many retailers' shelves depleted. The wants exist. They are waiting for intelligent direction from salesmen, advertising men and retailers.

*Hoyt's Service, Inc.*  
**PLANNED ADVERTISING**

116 West 32nd Street, New York

80-Boylston St., cor. Tremont St., Boston, Mass.

Leader-News Building, Cleveland, Ohio

Third National Bank Building, Springfield, Mass.

MEMBERS: American Association of Advertising Agencies—Audit Bureau of Circulation—National Outdoor Advertising Bureau.